

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 056338
ORIGIN IO-13

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TAGS: UNESCO

SUBJECT: U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNESCO

1. FOLLOWING IS EDITORIAL WHICH APPEARED IN NEW YORK TIMES
MONDAY, MARCH 14: QUOTE

2. IN THE FALL OF 1974, THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION VOTED, IN EFFECT, TO
EXCLUDE ISRAEL FROM ITS ACTIVITIES. THIS ACTION TRANS-
FORMED THE BASIC NATURE OF UNESCO, SUBSTITUTING POLITICAL
FOR HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS IN ITS CHOICES OF
ACTIVITIES. TO PROTEST THIS POLITICIZATION, AND TO FORCE
A REVERSAL OF ITS STANCE ON ISRAEL, CONGRESS VOTED TO
SUSPEND AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNESCO'S BUDGET. THE
UNITED STATES IS NOW NEARLY THREE YEARS--OR DOLS. 70
MILLION--IN ARREARS, AND UNESCO, DEPRIVED OF 25 PERCENT OF
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PAGE 02 STATE 056338

ITS ANNUAL BUDGET, FACES A MAJOR FINANCIAL CRISIS.

3. THE BUDGET PRESSURE, COMBINED WITH SOME SKILLFUL
DIPLOMACY, HAS HAD ITS EFFECT. AT THE MOST RECENT UNESCO
GENERAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI, KENYA, LAST NOVEMBER, THE
ORGANIZATION CONDEMNED ISRAEL'S POLICIES IN THE OCCUPIED
ARAB TERRITORIES BUT RESTORED ISRAEL TO FULL MEMBERSHIP.

4. CONGRESS IS NOW WEIGHING A REQUEST BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO PAY UP OUR DEBTS IN FULL. SOME ARGUE THAT TO PROTEST THE POLITICALLY OFFENSIVE RESOLUTIONS AT NAIROBI, SOMETHING LESS THAN THE FULL PAYMENT WOULD BE BETTER. PAYING JUST ONE YEAR'S ASSESSMENT WOULD PRESERVE OUR VOTING RIGHTS IN UNESCO; BUT ANYTHING LESS THAN A TWO-YEAR PAYMENT WOULD LEAVE THE ORGANIZATION NEAR BANKRUPTCY. NOT ONLY WOULD THIS THREATEN HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS, SUCH AS EARTHQUAKE RESEARCH AND LITERACY PROGRAMS, BUT IT MIGHT ALSO LEAD TO A NEW AND BITTER CONFRONTATION INSIDE UNESCO. A FULL PAYMENT, ON THE OTHER HAND, MIGHT CONSOLIDATE THE PROGRESS MADE SO FAR, AND STILL LEAVE THE UNITED STATES THE OPTION OF WITHHOLDING FUTURE DUES IN CASE OF A POLITICAL RELAPSE.

5. THE PURPOSE OF HOLDING BACK FUNDS WAS TO PROTEST UNESCO'S UNACCEPTABLY POLITICAL ACTIONS. PRECISELY BECAUSE THE TACTIC WORKED, IT SHOULD NOT NOW BE MISUED. CONGRESS SHOULD VOTE TO PAY UP THE ARREARS IN FULL. END QUOTE.

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